

CONTINUING VETERINARY MEDICAL EDUCATION COMMUNITY ANIMAL CARE & CONTROL PRACTICUM

Veterinarians can obtain up to 8 hours of continuing education (CE) that are not only free but are held at convenient times and have no travel expenses associated with them. The Texas State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners has approved veterinarians to obtain CE credits through their local agencies that provide animal care and control services. Please note that this Practicum is designed to be an educational experience for the veterinarian, not time donated to a local shelter.

Here's how it works. The veterinarian makes the specific arrangements with any of the participating animal shelters or animal control agencies. A list of participating shelters is available from the Texas Department of Health or the State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners. Upon concluding the Practicum at the animal services agency, the veterinarian completes the required Community Animal Care & Control Practicum Analysis and keeps it on file as documentation of continuing education.

The specific arrangements (such as date, time, and activities) made between the veterinarian and the animal care and control agency are flexible and should be tailored to meet specific needs. The veterinarian can obtain continuing education credits for the Practicum on a one-time basis; repeating the Practicum in subsequent years does not qualify for additional credits.

The Practicum includes three components:

1. one-on-one discussions with shelter staff on the medical, social, economic, and political issues involved in community-based animal care and control;
2. hands-on experiences which could include, but not be limited to, accompanying an animal control officer while he or she is in the field, capturing wildlife or loose livestock, attending a presentation at a local school on responsible pet ownership, or conducting a cruelty investigation; and/or
3. a tour of the facility (if the organization has a shelter).

Upon completion of the Practicum, the veterinarian will be able to:

- describe the unique disease control problems faced by that shelter;
- recognize the leading causes of the dog and cat surplus in his/her community;
- identify the agency's mission and the primary hindrances the animal service agency faces in trying to accomplish that mission;
- understand the complexity of irresponsible pet ownership at a community level; and
- list the legal tools available to animal care and control personnel.

Additional information on this continuing education program can be obtained from:

- your regional Texas Department of Health Zoonosis Control office;
- Texas Department of Health central headquarters at (512) 458-7255;
- Texas State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners at (512) 305-7555.